

CONSUMER ALERT

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Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection



The Real Virus in a Tech Support Scam? The Scammer.

Release Date: January 30, 2014

Contact: Jerad Albracht, 608-224-5007

Jim Dick, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

MADISON – If you receive a call out of the blue claiming that your computer has a virus and that the caller can help you get rid of it, hang up immediately. It is a scam.

These “tech support” scams have been around for a long time and are very common. The callers often falsely claim to represent Microsoft or a local tech support company to gain the consumer’s trust. They tell the consumer that they can remove the (non-existent) virus from their computer for a fee. The caller asks the victim to download software from the internet that grants them remote access to the system.

If you allow these scammers to access your computer, they can load any number of malicious software programs onto your machine and they may access your files as well. For people who shop, file taxes, access medical records or bank online, a computer may hold a wealth of personal and financial information including Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses and banking and routing account numbers. Giving access to a computer-savvy scammer is a recipe for disaster.

In addition, these scammers often require payment for their “services” by phone using a credit card. With the victim’s card numbers, the scammer is likely to pile on additional charges to the account.

Again, if you receive one of these tech support phone calls, simply hang up. If you fear that your system may actually be infected with a virus, contact a trusted local tech support company instead.

For additional consumer information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at datcp.wisconsin.gov, send an e-mail to datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov or call the Consumer Information Hotline at 800-422-7128.

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